

**Bromsgrove District Council  
Planning Committee**

**Committee Update 2  
3 August 2020**

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**Application Number:** 19/1544

**Site Address:** Seafield Farm, Seafield Lane, Beoley

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**Further Representations**

- Members will be aware that the applicant and Local Residents Group have submitted Counsel Opinions in relation to the development. In response to these, your officers sought independent legal advice on behalf of the District Council. All three documents have been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting and placed on the Council's website. The two Counsel opinions have been considered along with the independent legal advice and officers have concluded that the Committee report is sound and requires no changes.
- On 29<sup>th</sup> July, the applicant circulated a letter to members of the Planning Committee, and which is also on the Council's website.

Members will already have digested the contents of this additional submission. My response therefore is limited to the following. I would like to respond to the complaint raised that the submitted Transport Statement, Travel Plan, Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, Financial Information and Supreme Court Case: *Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) v. North Yorkshire CC [2020]* were not referred to in the report. This all formed part of the application submission and members can be assured that these documents were taken into account. The officer's assessment was made in the light of these submission documents and were found not to be sufficiently convincing to overcome the reasons for refusal.

Furthermore, the applicant claims there are no new buildings proposed within the development. The issue of new built development is fully covered in the Committee report.

- Petition from Local Residents Group received 31 July 2020 containing 30 signatures with the following statement:

- Inappropriate Development within the Greenbelt and impact upon the Openness of the Greenbelt
- Traffic Impact & potential Highways Danger from HGV's and other vehicles together with use of adjacent field(s) for Car Parking
- The Commercial activity at this site appears principally for Leisure & Entertainment uses and not as a '*Rural Educational & Interpretation Visitor Centre*'
- We feel some of the information presented may be misleading and residents are keen for the reality to be fully clear to the Council and it's Officers
- A number of Existing Planning Enforcements and non-compliance with Planning Regulations currently relate to this site and the wider Oakland/Seafield site (listed at rear)
- Four recent applications / enforcements within 0.5 to 1 mile for a similar change of use (e.g. of poultry sheds) and retrospective Applications ALL refused or dismissed at Appeal

Members have been provided with a direct copy from the Group and is available on the Council's website.

- An objection letter received from the Local Residents Group. This has been circulated to members and the applicant in advance of the meeting and is available on the Council's website.
- The Local Residents Group have issued their own visual impact assessment and before and after photographs. Images where there was risk of individual members of the public being identified have been redacted. These documents are now available on the Council's website.
- Beoley Parish Council (BPC) is concerned that the latest comments issued by BPC may be used by the applicant to say they supersede the comments contained within the committee report and wrongly construed that BPC now supports the application. BPC has confirmed today that it does not support the application, and that its formal response remains as stated in the committee report.

Available to view on Council's website.

- Two further letters of support from A Lloyd and H Beckett have been submitted and available to view on the Council's website.
- Petition received in support of the application consisting of 336 signatures gathered from visitors at the Farm Park.

- An on-line petition (change.org) in support of the application, with 2435 signatures as of 2<sup>nd</sup> August. The petition statement:

*'Attwell Farm Park is an independently run family business that has been farming in Beoley, Worcestershire since 1962. Our farming history & experience ranges from Poultry farming, Animal Husbandry, Pedigree Livestock Management & Egg farming. In the summer of 2017, we officially diversified our farm and opened our doors to the public with our farm park. Offering not only educational packages, but a fun & safe family environment for all ages.*

*'Our key focus at Attwell farm park is education, where we celebrate all that is amazing about British farming & Animal Husbandry. At Attwell Farm Park we are always striving to contribute to national curriculum's. Working with early learning, Primary, SEN Classes all the way up to Universities.*

*'Since opening the farm park in the summer of 2017 in a more formal model, we have been able to create 20 local jobs. A huge difference if you go back to 2016 where we struggled to employ 3 staff members, two of which were family members. The park is creating jobs, apprenticeships & work experience opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. We anticipate we could be up to 50 plus staff members by the end of this year with them all being local.*

*'We are working with organisations such as the Heart of Worcestershire college's special educational needs department and have recently set up a partnership with Worcestershire's Mencap Employment Service. Offering Work experience & Voluntary opportunities in a variety of fields at the Farm Park. The experiences they will gain from volunteering will help the students & Interns move forward for paid employment. Many students who have learning disabilities, struggle with communication and confidence and work experience at the farm promotes both these aspects.*

*'During the COVID-19 outbreak, we had to shut our farm park. We kept our farm shop open, offering local home deliveries & click and collect services for those most vulnerable and key workers. We wanted to do our bit by providing the local community wholesome farm produce and essentials. We also created educational activities and worksheets for families to do at home. #BringingTheFarmToYou - Our visitors have been incredibly supportive, we cannot thank them enough. We had to furlough the entire staff except 3 people. We are very fortunate that we have not made any redundancies and have now been able to open the Farm park again, under reduced numbers & strict social distancing guidelines. We are now getting back to a position to create new job roles and employ once again.*

*'We are currently going through a very exhausting battle with the Bromsgrove District Council planning department, who are recommending refusing our 'retrospective planning application. We need your support now more than*

*ever. By signing this petition and gaining your support, you are enabling us to move forward with Attwell farm park and all the opportunities we can offer.*

*'By signing this petition you agree & support that we, the undersigned, give support to Attwell Farm Park for this essential Rural Educational centre development as it gives great benefit to our children and young people, by way of education(supporting the school curriculum) and training in agriculture, the environment, learning through physical play and creativity and so much more.'*

- Submission of 149 supporting comments taken from the applicant's on-line petition and is available on the Council's website.
- Objections received from C Richards and H Gilbert and are available on the Council's website.
- Letter sent to Councillor Deeming by the applicant. Reference is also made to the Government's Chief Planner's Covid-19 advice that amongst other things priority should be given to 'decision-making to ensure the planning system continues to function, especially where this will support the local economy'. Available on the Council's website.

Your officers have taken account of this statement and are of the view that it does not change the planning balance as detailed in the committee report.

- With regards to protected species, the Council's appointed ecologist recommended that given the application was retrospective suitable planning conditions should be included to ensure there are no adverse impacts on bats and breeding birds.